

Date: December 14, 2004

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OFFICE OF
PAT MILLER

2004 DEC 17 PM 2:45

DEC 17 2004

Anthony J. Stokes
#250124 B.M.C.X.
P.O. Box 2000, Site #2
Wartburg, TN. 37887

T.R.A. DOCKET ROOM

REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Chairman Pat Miller, Director Deborah Taylor Tate, Director
Sara Kyle, Director Ron Jones, Tennessee Regulatory Authority
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

RE: 2004 Docket #04-00166 and 04-00211

Dear Chairman Pat Miller,

"Good Day", to you Sir! My name and address are listed above, and I am writing you about the inmate phone rates rising. Before I write you in some detail; I would like to openly say I am only one inmate, but my voice speaks for many.

As your well aware the problems of poverty and lack of education along with various others elements keep the incarceration rates growing. For those who are incarcerated the only chance for a better life comes from rehabilitation. Yet, the rehabilitation may come in various forms, but family and friends have always been the strongest common link for those to repair their lives. To raise the phone rates and shorten the calls would only add to destroying the bond of the family and friend nucleus. I will not go into how the families and friends bare the cost of these calls and how inmates work for low wages to put money on their phone account to reach family and friends. Neither will I go into the competitiveness of society and how the phone service competition only adds to lower and lower rates (Bell South, Sprint, AT&T, 10-10-220); Yet inmates rates only seem to go up but in society the rates are in competition to go down. This puts an enormous strain on the inmates and their families and creates an unfair monopoly. An if nothing is to be said concerning this monopoly then at least allow our serviceable rate and allotted time.

As your well aware many inmates are from various places throughout the U.S. and this plan that your considering is going to all but take away any access one has with their love ones.

I will leave you with this thought T.C.A. § 4-6-138 and 139 says:

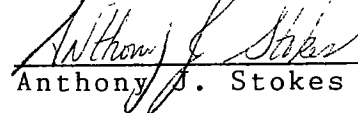
INMATES; USE FOR PERSONAL GAIN

It is unlawful for any person having supervision or control of inmates of the Department of Correction to use, or allow to be used, such inmates for personal gain or allow such inmates to work on private property, except as provided by law.

T.C.A. § 4-6-139, Inmates; Use for Personal Gain; A
violation of § 4-6-138 is a Class E Felony.

I would hope you give this matter a great deal of thought.
"Thank You" and "Good Day", to you!

Respectfully,


Anthony J. Stokes

CC: Governor Phil Bredesen,
Mr. Riley Darnell, Secretary of State
Claire Drowota, Select Oversight Committee of Corrections
Mr. Paul G. Summers, Office of the Attorney General

Telephone Rates Likely to Increase

URGENT ALERT! ACTION REQUIRED

SPEAK UP OR PAY UP

The cost for receiving calls from the incarcerated could go up if we don't act fast. Tennessee officials need to hear from you, the children, families, friends and attorneys, who pay for calls from a Tennessee prison or jail. The length of telephone calls is also a major concern. Currently, most inmates at Charles Bass Correctional Complex (a state reception center) can only make a 10 minute call which costs \$1.00. This means a regular 30 minute call, typical of most prisons in Tennessee, would cost \$3.00 for a local call. Not only is this an extremely high increase (from \$1.00 for 30 minutes), but the decrease in the length of the call at a jail or prison prohibit both the inmate and his or her loved ones or attorney to successfully manage the initial stages of adjustment to the incarceration crisis. We want to let the Governor, Tennessee Regulatory Authority, Secretary of State and Attorney General along with the Select Oversight Committee on Corrections know that we can not afford an increase in the cost and a decrease in the length of local or long distance calls from a Tennessee jail, prison or any other penal institution. As tax-paying and voting citizens we realize the following.

- While Global Tel-Link, the current telephone provider for the Tennessee Department of Correction and other carriers for local jails, have lawyers to protect their interest, Tennessee families and legal counsel of inmates rely on the State to keep cost affordable. **Docket No. 04-00166 and Docket No. 04-00211**, if approved, could allow higher rates for calls from inmates at Tennessee jails and prisons. We urge all Tennessee officials, working on behalf of Tennessee citizens to vote against any increases in cost and any possible decreases in the time length of calls from a state or local penal institution. We can not afford to pay drastically increased rates.
- We also can not afford, as good citizen of Tennessee, to stop improving our family relationships via regular telephone calls with our incarcerated loved one. We know our actions help reduce the costs of recidivism (repeated incarcerations) and make our communities safer. Ultimately, improved relationships between Tennessee's inmates in jail or prison and their families help relieve the tax burden that all Tennesseans will have to pay to build new prisons.

- The telephone service provider needs to be more accountable to family, friends and attorneys who directly or indirectly pay for the calls inmates make. Over the years that Global Tel-Link has been the service provider for state run facilities, **Many issues go unresolved because of poor customer service, difficulty reaching a service representative because of extremely long hold times and accounting practices that make it difficult to either receive a satisfactory response or come to an understanding about billing practices**
- We also understand that the business of providing telephone services for inmates in Tennessee prisons and jails is a multi-million dollar enterprise. As buyer of these services we insist that our concerns be seriously addressed by all State offices and persons as demonstration of responsibility to your constituents.



As a family member, friend or attorney of a person in a jail or prison in Tennessee we urge you to write the state officials listed on the back of this page and let them know how you feel about these issues. The major points are in bold and may be used to compose your letter. We suggest that you write one letter and make several copies to mail to the offices listed on the back, and also send a copy to Reconciliation. We want to know who and how many have responded, so we can be sure to keep you informed of any developments. Please make copies of this flyer and share it with your family, other prison or jail visitors or mail it the inmate that calls you. *We must speak up* or the cost of talking to our incarcerated loved one will cause us to *pay up* or *shut up*.

Please call Rev. Vetrel Smith at Reconciliation at (615) 292-6371 to volunteer on this project. To learn more about dockets 04-00166 and 04-00211 on the web go to: <http://www.state.tn.us/tra> and click on the *Active Docket* tab, click the 2004 tab and click the first docket number. Repeat, and review the next docket number.



RECONCILIATION MINISTRIES, INC.

702 51st Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37209
(615) 292-6371 Office • (615) 292-6383 (Fax)



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IMPORTANT

Invest less than \$2.25 in postage to have your voice heard. Please be sure to include in your letters, emails, or in your telephone calls: Docket 04-00166 and Docket 04-00211.

MAIL TO:

Governor Phil Bredesen
Tennessee State Capitol
Nashville, Tennessee 37243
phil.bredesen@state.tn.us

Mr. Riley Darnell
Secretary of State
Tennessee State Capitol
Nashville, Tennessee 37243
1-615-741-2819

Mr. Paul G. Summers
Office of the Attorney General
P.O. Box 20207
Nashville, Tennessee 37202-0207
1-615-741-3491

Chairman Pat Miller
Director Deborah Taylor Tate
Director Sara Kyle
Director Ron Jones
Tennessee Regulatory Authority
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37243
1-800-342-8359

Select Oversight Committee on Corrections
Claire Drowota, Executive Director
Rachel Jackson Building, 1st Floor
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Also sent us a copy

Attn: Speak Up or Pay Up
Reconciliation
702 51st Avenue North
Nashville, Tennessee 37209
Or fax your letter to 615-292-6383

SAMPLE TELEPHONE CALL

Hello, my name is _____ and I live in (name of city, Tennessee). I am calling to voice my opinion about TRA Docket 04-00211 and 04-00166 as it relates to calls from a Tennessee prison or jail. I want the (name of the position. Example: "the Secretary of State") to know that it is in the best interest of Tennessee families, friends who receive calls from prisoners to not raise the telephone rates and keep the length of the calls to 30 minutes. As a concerned citizen I will be watching this issue very closely. Please let Mr /Ms _____ know that I hope that I have his/her support of on this issue. Thank you.

SAMPLE LETTER

Date _____

RE: 2004 Docket #'s, 04-00166 and 04-00211

Dear Sir or Madame:

The Tennessee Regulatory Authority Docket 04-00166 and 04-00211, if approved, could allow higher rates for calls from inmates at Tennessee jails and prisons. I am urging you to support the children and families of prisoners and vote against any increases in costs and any possible decreases in the time length of calls from a state or local penal institution.

Families of Tennessee prisoners are the forgotten victims of crime. Innocent of any wrong doing, they too often suffer in silence. It is therefore very important that elected and appointed government officials protect our interests. Our families are primarily responsible for telephone and many other expenditures of our incarcerated loved ones. The proposed changes would result in drastic telephone rate increases that we cannot afford. We also cannot afford to stop improving our family relationships through regular 30-minute telephone calls. Healthy family bonds during imprisonment help to reduce repeated incarcerations and ultimately make our communities safer for all Tennessee families. To shorten the length of the calls would be devastating to family bonds. Affordable local and long distance calls are especially critical for families who are not physically or financially able to visit prisons that are often in remote locations where public transportation is not available and over night accommodations and meals would drive up the costs. I am also concerned that the current telephone provider, Global Tel-Link lacks accountability to its customers. We insist that improved customer service and better billing services are required of all telephone service providers to prisons and jails in Tennessee.

As a concerned citizen, I will be watching these issues very closely. I earnestly hope that you will support families of Tennessee's prisoners and not the interests of big business.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Address
City, State, Zip

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Mr. Paul G. Summers
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Rachel Jackson Building, 1st Floor
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Also sent us a copy

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Sincerely,

Your Name
Address
City, State, Zip